

## Influenza Activity in Kansas as of December 31, 2003

The latest flu report from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for the week ending December 27, 2003 (week 52) classifies flu activity in the state as "Regional." The classification is based on reports of increased influenza-like illness (ILI) in less than half of the state's 6 public health regions and recent laboratory confirmed influenza in effected regions.

Although influenza activity continues to increase in the United States overall, activity is declining in certain states. During week 51 (ending December 20, 2003) some states including Colorado and Texas experienced a decline in ILI activity as indicated on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>. National results for week 52 should be posted on January 2, 2004 or soon after.

Laboratory tests have confirmed that primarily influenza type A N3H2 viruses are circulating in Kansas this season; strain information from CDC is pending. CDC has stated during a 12/15/2003 conference call that 71% to 82% of the influenza A isolates are of the Fujian. strain. Two presentation of influenza type B has also been confirmed by a rapid test in the Southeastern part of the state.

This season's vaccine was formulated to protect against type A/Panama, type A/New Caledonia and type B/Hong Kong and is expected to offer some protection against the A/Fujian strain.

KDHE strongly recommends flu shots for all high-risk individuals and everyone should be reminded to practice good respiratory etiquette i.e.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze and throw the used tissue in the waste basket
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow
- After sneezing/coughing, always wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal; items.

If you have any questions about influenza activity in Kansas or wish to become a sentinel site for surveillance, please contact Daniel Neises (785) 296-5585 or Kathleen Waters (785) 296-0028.